

The Call Becomes Relational

Responding to the Matriarch's Call — Essay Two

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I ended the previous Essay at a threshold. Invitations had begun to arrive. People were rearranging their plans, opening their homes, offering places to gather, and stepping into collaboration—several of them before we had ever met in person.

The physical Journey was still months away. Yet its relational life had already begun.

At the time, I began to feel the generosity of what was happening. Only over time would I become aware of its full extent.

When resonance became invitation

The first real possibility of a Gathering came through an essay I had written called *Listening to the Matriarch*.

Michelle responded. Her message carried more than appreciation. Something in the essay had moved the Matriarch archetype from an idea she held into an experience she could feel more emotionally and in her body. She could imagine the inquiry taking form where she lived.

> *"Reading your words felt like a more emotional, embodied sense than I've felt before. This Matriarch archetype opens up something deeper, more primal, more trusting, more creative in me."*
>
> *"And YES, let's cook something up together!"*
>
> *—Michelle Holliday, April 2026*

Until then, *Matriarch on Tour* had been an inner knowing, a name, a direction, and a series of enlivening conversations. Through her response, the inquiry entered a new relationship with someone who seemed to have heard the Matriarch's Call in her own way and felt touched by what the inquiry opened. Our exchange brought a place where we might meet into view.

Something shifted in me: *This is becoming real.*

The first possibility was an intimate Gathering near Montreal. Then one conversation opened another. She made the connection with someone she knew well - her friend Val, and with her another possibility emerged.

> *"I aspire to be an elder and to be a matriarch. I'm drawn to the archetype of the hag or the matriarch. … I really don't believe it's for the isolated hag at the edge of the village. It's for us to be in it together—and to discern and learn from our various perspectives."*
>
> *—Val Steinmann, May 2026*

I no longer remember the exact order in which each conversation crossed the threshold into an invitation. I remember the experience of a route revealing itself through connection.

The invitation in one place made it easier to recognize the next. Toronto and Montreal emerged in Canada.

With Chrystal in Puyallup near Seattle in the United States.

> *"I am so incredibly inspired to co-create this with you. I was reminded by a dear friend that I have been wanting to create in this space for a very long time—and that the time is now for it to come alive."*
>
> *—Chrystal Busick, July 2026*

And Surf City in El Salvador, with my dear friend Lisa.

> *"I would love to co-create. I think it's matriarchal, because the Matriarch wants to make home and make sacred. … I feel so much affinity with what we're doing. Let's create a unique variation on the Matriarch on Tour for El Salvador."*
>
> *—Lisa Norton, April 2026*

The intention stayed clear and the form took shape through these relationships.

On paper, this became an itinerary across three countries. In lived experience, every point on the map began with someone saying: *Yes, let us explore what this might become here.*

That yes opened a conversation from which agreement could grow.

Trust before familiarity

I had never met three of the four women with whom I would co-host in person. Our relationships had developed online. We had never shared a physical room or held a circle together. We could sense resonance in one another, while much about how we would meet in practice remained unknown.

Still, they were willing to begin.

They gave time to the inquiry. They brought their own wisdom, their knowledge of the women and communities around them, and their sense of what each place could hold. They listened for who might feel drawn to participate, what questions were alive locally, and what kind of welcome each place could offer.

> This was where the beautiful word *collaboration* began to acquire texture.

It meant discovering how another person's pace met mine. It meant noticing when the same words carried different meanings for each of us. It meant allowing enthusiasm to become specific: Who were we inviting? What were we inviting them into? What could each of us hold? What still needed clarity?

Sometimes resonance flowed easily into shared action. Sometimes an enthusiastic yes revealed the beginning of a much longer conversation. Sometimes what we thought had become clear opened again and needed further exploration. All of it belonged to the journey from recognition into practice.

Across the four places, the deeper inquiry remained present, while its expression changed. Each collaboration partner heard something from her own context. Her presence brought local relationships, knowledge, and questions into the emerging form. Each constellation invited us to listen again.

Trust, I began to sense, gave us enough ground to take the next honest step together while we were still finding alignment and growing familiar with one another.

The physical Journey begins

When I finally travelled toward Toronto, the first Gathering was still several days away. Before it began, I spent four amazing days with friends at a cabin by a lake.

Natasha and Eric opened their beautiful cabin. Seija, Layman, and Danielle joined us. Only when I was there did I learn that they had shifted and arranged their holiday plans around the brief window in which I could be with them.

I was at the physical beginning of the Journey, and I could not have wished for a more beautiful way to begin. Those days truly felt like an initiation. I was surrounded by companionship, laughter, tears, dance, care, and the generous curiosity of friends willing to receive me and the unfolding experiment before any of us could know where it would lead.

Tash, Eric, Seija, Layman, and Danielle: thank you, from the depths of my heart and soul. Together, you formed an extraordinary field around me at the moment I crossed from preparing the Journey into living it. I still feel the joy, love, gratitude, and humility of those days.

There I was, bringing a new name—*Matriarch on Tour*—and an inquiry that was still discovering its form. Around me were people who had made room in their lives so that I could rest, arrive, and be received. Before the first Gathering had formed its circle, I was discovering something essential: responding to a Call would invite me to offer myself, and it would also invite me to receive.

> Receiving has its own vulnerability.

Letting another person's generosity reach us can loosen the quiet belief that anything meaningful must be accomplished through our own effort. A path is made by the one who walks it and by those who make a place for her along the way.

Perhaps you know this tenderness too: the moment when giving feels familiar and receiving invites you to become spacious in a different way.

Welcome made tangible

The welcome I experienced at the cabin continued throughout the Journey, taking wonderfully practical forms.

Beds were offered. Meals were prepared. People adjusted plans, shared places they loved, met me at thresholds, and made room for me in the texture of their everyday lives.

All Gatherings of this *Journey of Inquiry* took place in homes. Living rooms, tables, gardens, kitchens, a yurt, a gazebo, and surrounding land and water became part of those circles. The spaces carried the presence and care of the people who lived there, and that shaped the particular intimacy of these first Gatherings.

In this Journey, the homes themselves became part of what held us. The deeper gesture was the making of a place: preparing a setting in which women could arrive, feel received, and enter an inquiry together.

Warmth and good intentions became practical. Calendars were rearranged. Invitations were carried into local relationships. Food was planned. Rooms were prepared. Time and resources were committed. Decisions were made, and responsibility was shared.

> Here, I experienced Love and Power together in ordinary action.

Love was present in the care, nourishment, generosity, and sense of belonging. Power was present in people's capacity to choose, commit, convene, and bring that care into form. They met in each concrete act of welcome: the loving impulse, and the power to make it real.

As I moved from place to place, I began to feel the reciprocity of the Journey. I had set out bringing something I wanted to offer. I was also receiving shelter, friendship, encouragement, beauty, food, time, attention, local wisdom, and the willingness of others to accompany an experiment whose meaning was unfolding one step at the time.

I was learning, too—about receiving, about trusting what others brought, about holding the intention without controlling its expression, and about allowing each constellation of women and place to teach me. These learnings became one of the Journey's most important gifts, and I will return to them in depth in a later essay.

From invitation to shared creation

The Matriarch's Call came to me as something I needed to respond to. Yet a *Journey of Inquiry* could not grow from my response alone. This Journey began to take form through resonance: women were touched by the Matriarch's Call in their own ways—sometimes consciously named, sometimes felt before they had language for it—and their responses began to meet mine.

I remained the source and initiator of *Matriarch on Tour*, bringing the wider inquiry and the intention from which this Journey had grown. The collaboration partners brought what they were holding from their own lives, places, and communities. With all of this, the first Gatherings began to find their shape.

We explored and shared. I listened and gathered what I heard. A Gathering Arc—the underlying movement of the shared inquiry—began to emerge. Together we sensed into the Arc, revised it, imagined a flow, and continued shaping it until it was time to welcome the women who would enter the circle.

The fuller story of that process belongs in the next essay. What matters here is the movement that made it possible: an inner response became an invitation; invitations became commitments; commitments became places, dates, conversations, and circles.

When I first imagined the inquiry traveling, I could see myself moving toward people and places. I would bring what I had been learning and invite women to gather in shared inquiry into the Matriarch archetype.

I could not yet see the responding movement coming toward me.

By the time four Gatherings stood on the map, that movement had become unmistakable. It lived in rearranged calendars and careful introductions, in prepared rooms and shared meals, in conversations willing to stay with questions, and in courageous yeses. It reached me through connection after connection with wonderful women, and through the many ways women made space for something they could feel before any of us could fully describe it.

> I followed the Call, and the world responded with generosity.

The Journey now had a route, four places, and four distinct collaborations. Our next question was how to create structures clear enough to hold the inquiry without limiting it, and open enough to respond to the women, the place, and what emerged among us.

With love,
Christiane

The story continues here:

A Shape for What We Could Not Plan